

Message Text

SECRET

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21

ACTION EA-06

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 L-01 H-02 INR-05 PM-03 PRS-01

SP-02 NSC-05 NSCE-00 CIAE-00 DLOS-03 /043 W

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P R 160630Z APR 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 2282

INFO AMEMBASSY SAIGON

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMCONGEN HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

DOD WASHDC

JCS WASHDC

CINCPAC

S E C R E T MANILA 4777

LIMDIS

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PBOR, RP, CH, VN

SUBJ: DISPUTED TERRITORIES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA

1. FOR SOME TIME, I HAVE BEEN CONCERNED THAT CURRENT DEVELOPMENTS IN VIET-NAM WOULD TEMPT PRC TO TAKE OVER SPRATLY ISLANDS AND OTHER DISPUTED TERRITORIES IN SOUTH CHINA SEA. I HAD ASKED CINCPAC TO MAINTAIN SPECIAL ALERT IN EVENT ANY CHINESE MOVEMENT SEEMED TO THREATEN PHILIPPINE UNITS STATIONED ON SOME OF THESE TERRITORIES.

2. IT NOW APPEARS THAT HANOI HAS HAD THIS SAME CONCERN AND HAS MOVED TO PRE-EMPT CHINESE TAKEOVER, AT LEAST OF THOSE ISLANDS OCCUPIED BY GVN. WE ARE ATTEMPTING DEVELOP FURTHER INFORMATION FROM MASTER OF SALVAGE VESSEL WHO SAW CHANGE OF FLAG AT NORTHEAST CAY AND FROM PHILIPPINE NAVY WHICH HAS REPORTS FROM ITS MARINE UNITS ON ADJACENT ATOLL. BUT, FROM AVAILABLE REPORTS, IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT DRV HAS SUBDUED GVN UNITS AND TAKEN CONTROL.

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3. QUITE APART FROM SIGNIFICANT REPERCUSSIONS THIS MOVE WILL HAVE IN PEKING, WHICH CLAIMS ALL THESE TERRITORIES, THIS DRV ACTION ONCE AGAIN RAISES ISSUE OF U.S. OBLIGATIONS UNDER U.S. PHILIPPINE MUTUAL DEFENSE TREATY. UNDER THAT TREATY, WE ARE OBLIGATED TO "ACT TO MEET THE COMMON DANGERS" IF PHILIPPINE "ARMED FORCES" ARE ATTACKED "IN THE PACIFIC." THIS ISSUE AROSE PREVIOUSLY IN HYPOTHETICAL VEIN WHEN CHINESE CAPTURED PARACEL ISLANDS. WASHINGTON DECISIONS ON THIS SUBJECT WERE INCONCLUSIVE AT THAT TIME.

4. IF ISSUE ARISES AGAIN AT THIS TIME, IT WILL OCCUR AT MOST AWKWARD JUNCTURE WHEN PHILIPPINES IS PUBLICLY ASKING QUESTIONS RE VALIDITY OF U.S. SECURITY COMMITMENTS. IT WILL ALSO ARISE AT MOMENT WHEN U.S. HAS SIGNIFICANT NAVAL AND AMPHIBIOUS FORCES IN THIS NEIGHBORHOOD FULLY CAPABLE OF DEMOLISHING ANY DRV ATTACK ON PHILIPPINE UNITS.

5. WE MUST PREPARE FOR EVENTUALITY THAT GOP WILL ASK TO CONSULT WITH US ON SECURITY OF THEIR FORCES AGAINST CONTINGENCY OF DRV ATTACK. I WOULD LIKE TO BE AS WELL PREPARED AS POSSIBLE FROM SUCH CONSULTATIONS SHOULD THEY ARISE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: PLEASE PROVIDE AUTHORITATIVE GUIDANCE SOONEST.
SULLIVAN

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NNN

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